

A Walking Tour Map of your Cromdale Community

Can you find where *you*
live in Cromdale?

"Northern Box"

Wooden boxes were produced by this company.

11402 - 79 Street

This store was originally Mr. Rugger's Ice Cream Parlour. Mr. Rugger kept two Shetland ponies, Nip and Tuck, at the back of the store to attract children.

7921 - 114 Avenue

This is a house built from railroad cars. Notice the early light standard on the street.

Chicken Hatchery

Located here in the 1920s.

Dominion Carton and Envelope Company

1 Cromdale School

The original Cromdale School was located at the north end of the playground.

11245 - 79 Street

From 1915 to 1920, this was the home of Commissioner David Mitchell, who built all these row-type houses.

Alsip Brick Company

This company closed down about 1920.

2 7913 - 112 Avenue South

Originally occupied by the Reeves family, this was the first home built in the Virginia Park subdivision.

Community League Building and Skating Rink

3 The Old Corona Hotel?

When you're standing here, there's "history beneath your feet"!

4 7847 - 111 Avenue

Former residence of Alexander Entwistle.

5 10931 - 81 Street

S. H. Muttart's first home in the Cromdale district.

6 7866 Jasper Avenue

Residence of Mayor Blatchford and his family from 1918 to 1936.

7870 Jasper Avenue

Solon Low, the national leader of the Social Credit Party, lived here after the Second World War. To accommodate his seven-child family, he enclosed the front and rear porches on the second storey to make extra bedrooms.

7 8120 Jasper Avenue

Former residence of Sherriff Robertson, this house has been, since 1936, the home of the Noak family, founders of Queen City Meats.

8134 Jasper Avenue

With money received for supplying the Edmonton City Police Department with buffalo coats, Louis Trudel built this house. Previously, the family had lived in the small house on the lane.

8 Borden Park and Exhibition Grounds

Fire Hall (Located just north of this point)

Amusement Park

Zoo

Bandshell

Skating Rink

11203 - 79 Street

From 1945 until recently, this was the home of James Singleton. In 1946, Mr. Singleton helped to found Soper-Singleton, a fire extinguisher supplies company.

7813 - 112 Avenue South

From 1947 to 1973 Magistrate McCulla lived in this house. Magistrate McCulla was a great curler and was the first President of the Thistle Club.

7731 - 112 Avenue South

This was the home of Mrs. Sara Golden from 1944 to 1970. For twenty-five years, Mrs. Golden was the Director of the cafeteria at the YWCA; the cafeteria in the new YWCA is named for her.

Gazebo

7721 - 112 Avenue South

This house was built by Max Dewar, who was the city architect. It was original in design — it faced the ravine instead of the street. The house has been extensively renovated.

11032 - 76 Street

From 1946 to 1953, this house was the residence of Reverend and Mrs. Barford. Reverend Barford was the first President of the Home and School Association of Cromdale and was the son of Vernon Barford, an early Edmonton settler after whom a school had been named.

Mrs. Grace Barford is the daughter of Mayor Kenneth Blatchford and is the great grand-daughter of James Lauder, Edmonton's first baker.

9 The Edmonton Standard Coal Mine

Extensive coal mining occurred under the Rat Creek Ravine from well before 1907 until 1923.

10 7739 - 111 Avenue

The "house that blew up" once stood at this address.

7744 Jasper Avenue

This house was built between 1923 and 1928 by Fire Captain Hardy, who used reclaimed charred timbers and old newspaper negatives for insulation. The house has been extensively renovated.

11 7696 Jasper Avenue

This is the only home built east of 77 Street in what is now Kinnaird Park. One of its early owners was Captain John Hall.

12 7824 Jasper Avenue

Built in 1907 by Robert S. Robertson, this is the oldest house on Jasper Avenue in Cromdale.

7832 Jasper Avenue

Former residence of Gladys Reeves. She was an assistant to photographer Ernest Brown and was the first woman in the West to have her own photography studios.

13 7852 Jasper Avenue

Former residence of Mayor Joe "Fightin' Joe" Clarke.

(Aerial photograph courtesy of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Province of Alberta.)

A Walk into the History of your Cromdale Community

We would like to invite you to take a walk into history . . . the history of Edmonton and of Cromdale in particular. You only have to know what to look for. And once you know, the past will come alive.

This walking tour was created so as not to lose the past and to make sure that our past in Edmonton and Cromdale will become part of our future. Many of the historically important buildings in Cromdale are still here for you to see; many of the people and stories of Cromdale are alive in the residents' memories.



Alexander Entwistle
Alexander Entwistle was known as “one of the leading motion picture theatre owners in the West.” And with good reason. Mr. Entwistle was the owner of a theatre chain that provided old-time Vaudeville acts and movies to countless Edmontonians. He owned the Pantages (or the Strand as it is called now), Empress, Princess, and Dreamland.

Mr. Entwistle was born in Darwin, Lancashire, England, and came to Edmonton in 1905 when he was about forty years old. He established his first theatre in 1909.

The Entwistles lived in Cromdale at 7847 - 111 Avenue (across from and probably on top of the old Corona Hotel). It was in this house that Alexander and his wife often entertained many of Vaudeville's great performers when they visited the city.

Please see number 4 in the map legend.

Borden Park and Exhibition Grounds

Today Borden Park and the Exhibition Grounds are the site of many recreational activities and good times. That was how it was years ago too . . .

In 1906 the city acquired 148 acres of land in the east end for a park. The park was named after the Prime Minister, Sir Robert L. Borden. Through the years, Borden Park and the Exhibition Grounds have provided many hours of enjoyment for many Edmontonians.

Until 1960, for example, there was a zoo; the animals were later transferred to the Storyland Valley Zoo. Buffalo used to roam in a paddock where the Bellevue Community League building is located today. There was a bandshell where concerts were held on Sunday afternoons. The most popular skating rink in north Edmonton was also located in Borden Park; the parking lot on 112 Avenue is now where it used to be. The Park also had a funland, complete with roller coaster, merry-go-round, and tunnel of love. The tunnel of love was called “The Old Mill” and consisted of a small boat that carried six people at a time through a curved wooden shed.



Just inside the Exhibition Grounds gate off 115 Avenue is the site of the first Cromdale Community League building. All week, the building served as the fire hall. It was relatively quiet, waiting always for the ringing of the fire alarm, but on Saturday night the quiet times were over — the building rang with the laughter and talk of community residents. They rolled up the canvas off the hardwood floor, and till 10 o'clock they played whist. Then the dancing began. (After that building was torn down, a new one was built at 82 Street and 111 Avenue.)

Back in 1919, the northern part of Borden Park was leased to the Edmonton Exhibition because the Exhibition had outgrown its grounds in the river flats. When the Exhibition first started, it sponsored an annual agricultural fair. Then in 1907, horse racing was added. In 1950, the Association began sponsoring the Canadian Western Rodeo, and in 1962 Klondike Days began. In 1974, the Coliseum was built, and each year it is the site of over 1,500 events.

Please see number 8 in the map legend.

The Old Corona Hotel?

How did the old Corona Hotel come to be “located” in the Rat Creek Ravine in Cromdale? The answer is really a matter of “history beneath your feet”! The story starts in 1904 when the Wise Block was built in downtown Edmonton at 106 Street and Jasper Avenue where the present-day Corona Hotel stands.

Mr. Wise, the original owner and architect of the building, remodelled the Wise Block and turned it into the Corona Hotel in 1908. (The McLean Block, which is located 107 Street and Jasper Avenue and which has just been renovated, was also built by Mr. Wise. It was built from the same plans used for the Wise Block.)

In 1932 the old Corona Hotel was totally destroyed by fire. When a place to dump the refuse and remains of the hotel was needed, Rat Creek Ravine in Cromdale was chosen. It is said that every brick, sink, tub, timber, and light fixture of the old Corona now provides good compact ground for 111 Avenue in Cromdale.

Please see number 3 in the map legend.



7696 Jasper Avenue

Although the original subdivision plan for Viewpoint, registered in 1912, shows lots extending almost to the end of the point through what is now Kinnaird Park, this is the only house to be built east of 77 Street. It was built in about 1912, and one of its early owners was Captain John Hall, a First World War veteran. Captain Hall was a Director of the Soldier Settlement Board and was the first Superintendent of the province-wide government liquor vending operation in the 1920s.

His daughter Mary was a teacher at Cromdale School for many years. The city now owns the property, and although at one time there was a plan to demolish the house for parking, it is hoped that this historic house can be maintained.

Not only was Kinnaird Park subdivided into lots, but the north side of 111 Avenue, then called Viewpoint Boulevard, was subdivided as well. The back of the lots extended down into the ravine. Some evidence of one building site can still be seen, though the house was knocked down several years ago. On your walk, look for the carragana hedge opposite 7741 - 111 Avenue.

Please see number 11 in the map legend.

Cromdale School

The school you see today was opened in 1931. But if you look to the north end of the playground, you will see where the original Cromdale school house stood. Imagine a two-room, two-storey school house nestled in the willows and bush, a school where children in the first four grades attended classes to learn the three Rs.

In later years, two other buildings were added. One was a small shed, which was joined to the school house to accommodate fifth-graders, and the other was a two-storey building moved in from the Highlands district. When the present school was built, the original school houses were torn down.

Please see number 1 in the map legend.

We hope this walking tour will help you to discover the uniqueness of Cromdale, to imaginatively re-create the past, and increase your concern for the future. Recently, many of the homes and other sites that are so much a part of what Cromdale was and is have been threatened by redevelopment. We also hope, then, that this walking tour may help, in some small way, to make sure that in years to come, Edmontonians will not only know about Cromdale but will also have a Cromdale to look at.



S. H. Muttart

The Muttart name is well-known in Edmonton for home-building and construction and, perhaps most of all now, for the Muttart Conservatory. One of the prominent members of the Muttart family was an early resident of Cromdale. Sampson Henry Muttart (known to almost everyone as S.H.) came to Edmonton from Prince Edward Island to join his brother Ben in the construction business here. That was in 1903, when S.H. was twenty-eight.

Throughout his career as a builder, S. H. Muttart built about 150 houses in Edmonton, and his concern was always for building for people. His policy of no downpayment and low monthly payments (sometimes as low as \$25 a month) was his way of making sure people could get houses. And that was a real contribution to a growing city.

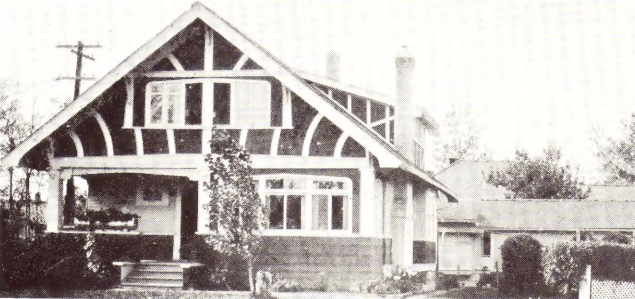
In 1915 he built the Muttart Block on the northwest corner of 97 Street and 103A Avenue, adjacent to where the Main Post Office now stands. At that time, 97 Street was Edmonton's main street and called Naimao Avenue. The Muttart Block was the largest apartment house in the city, and at a cost of \$320,000 to build, it was probably the most expensive. Unfortunately for the Muttarts, interest rates rose faster than rents, and the bank foreclosed on the building. Still, that was only a temporary setback.

In 1925, S.H. and his wife Alma moved to Cromdale, living first at 10931 - 81 Street (one daughter lives across the street today). Later, around 1931, the family moved to 7835 - 111 Avenue. S.H. and Alma had six children — two girls and four boys. Wanting to start his sons in business, S.H. moved a three-car garage from 10931 - 81 Street out to 86 Street near the Fort Trail. That garage became the office for the Muttart Lumber Yard. Later, the business was relocated to its present site at 84 Street just off Jasper Avenue.

Please see number 5 in the map legend.

7739 - 111 Avenue

As neighbours sat down to lunch on April 25, 1952, a loud explosion was heard. Debris was scattered around the neighbourhood. A hot water heater landed on a back porch across the alley. A bird cage was flung into a nearby tree, door open. The canary was never found. What had happened was that a gas leak had caused an explosion that blew the walls out of the Warner residence. The damage was so extensive that the house had to be levelled. Fortunately, no one was injured. Mrs. Warner had gone downtown shopping just that morning.



This picture shows the old house before the explosion. The house had been built in 1912. Notice that it faced east, rather than north as the present house does. The brick walk that was on the north side of the hedge still remains. This house was the match of the house opposite on the block, 7777 - 111 Avenue, which has undergone extensive renovation.

Please see number 10 in the map legend.



Walter Scott Robertson

When Walter Scott Robertson settled in Edmonton in 1882, he brought with him a piano — Edmonton's first. Then in 1893 he built the city's first opera hall, near the location of the Dreamland Theatre. But Robertson's activities were not restricted to the musical, though that was one of his loves.

He was also sheriff for northern Alberta, and when he decided that that job didn't pay well enough, he turned to other activities. He ran a wholesale grocery and a flour mill, speculated in real estate, and outfitted prospectors on their way to the Klondike.

The residences of the Robertson family were as varied as Sheriff Robertson's jobs. Mrs. Robertson complained that they moved more than any other family in Edmonton. The Robertsons were one of the few families to live outside of Fort Edmonton during the Riel Rebellion. They lived in a log house located near what is now the Macdonald Hotel. One day, a horseman rode up, excitedly shouting that the Indians were attacking St. Albert. After some momentary fright, everyone calmed down when they realized he meant Prince Albert, which posed a somewhat lesser threat.

Then for awhile the Robertsons lived in a house near the present-day Salvation Army near 96 Street. Later, around 1914, Sheriff Robertson built one of the first houses in Cromdale at 8120 Jasper Avenue.



The house was of unique design — the rooms surrounded a circular living room that was lit only by skylights in the cupola. The above picture was taken while the Robertsons still lived in the house. The buffalo head you see is still there today, and it gives an indication of Walter Scott Robertson's interest in guns and hunting. Robertson was, in fact, one of the early presidents of the Edmonton Rifle Association.

Long-time residents of the neighbourhood remember Sheriff Robertson as an elderly man sitting on the porch in a rocking chair.

Please see number 7 in the map legend.

The Edmonton Standard Coal Mine

Cromdale is full of surprises, and one of them is the old Edmonton Standard Coal Mine, which was established and operating well before 1907.

At the mouth of Rat Creek, the Standard Mine Limited sunk a fifty-four foot shaft into a six-foot seam of coal. This was on River Lot 26, about twenty-six feet below the low-water level of the North Saskatchewan River.

In 1915, a flood forced the mining company to move the mine farther up the Ravine. The mine's tippie (the apparatus by which loaded coal cars are tipped and emptied) was built at a location that is now 74 Street and 110 or 111 Avenue.

In 1923, after a major fire and with the advent of natural gas service making coal mining unprofitable, the Edmonton Standard Coal Mine was closed.

Please see number 9 in the map legend.



Joe Clarke

Known as “Fightin' Joe,” Mr. Clarke was a quick-tempered champion of the underdog and a man always ready to take up a challenge. A long-time Cromdale resident, Joe Clarke was mayor five times between 1919 and 1938. His most notable achievement was in getting an athletic park for Edmonton — Clarke Stadium. Joe even went to Ottawa and personally negotiated the deal for the land with Prime Minister McKenzie-King. The land on which Clarke Stadium is located was leased from the federal government — the site had contained the vegetable gardens of the federal penitentiary — for \$1 a year for ninety-seven years.

It is only proper that Joe Clarke was the man responsible for Clarke Stadium for he himself was an athlete. But he was also more than that too. Before arriving in Edmonton, he already had a colourful and varied past. He had panned for gold in the Yukon, had joined (and then deserted) the Northwest Mounted Police, and had studied law at Osgoode Hall at the University of Toronto. Still, it wasn't for his battles to improve the city that he earned the nickname “Fightin' Joe.”

Joe Clarke was infamous for his use of his fists to make a point. Joe once had a fistfight with Mayor MacNamara in Council Chambers and continued it afterwards outside City Hall. Most people recognized, though, that Joe's quick temper and his use of his fists to express himself were simply part of the man's overall energy and enthusiasm. And so, Joe Clarke died a well-loved and respected man. His daughter Muriel still lives in the family home in Cromdale.

Please see number 13 in the map legend.



7824 Jasper Avenue

Built in 1907 by Robert S. Robertson, manager of McBain Lumber Company, this is the oldest house on Jasper Avenue in Cromdale. The workmen have posed for one of the carpenters to take this picture. The photograph was later reproduced as a picture postcard, and on the back a handwritten message to Robert's wife reads:

“This is a picture one of the carpenters took. Unfortunately he took too much lawn and not enough house. It will, however, give you an idea of how it looks. How do you like the Queen Anne windows? The Mary Ann's are in the kitchen. Porter is sitting at the door. Pat, the Irishman who dug the drain, is the fellow in the shade. Don't know the other fellow's name. Porter Junior and another carpenter are where I wish you and I were. — Bob”



This picture was taken from the front porch, looking toward the river. It shows the newly installed fence and one of the coal wagons from the Edmonton Standard Coal Mine operating at the end of Rat Creek. Apparently the coal wagons would often come dangerously close to the house, sometimes knocking the front steps.

In the 1930s, this house was extensively renovated by J. Wilbert Wright, a local builder. It was made into four suites. Mrs. Kathleen Rutledge, daughter of R. S. Robertson, still lives in the house, and we are grateful to her for lending us the pictures.

Please see number 12 in the map legend.



Kenneth Blatchford

At one time, the Edmonton municipal airport was known as “Blatchford Airfield.” The man it was named after was Kenneth A. Blatchford, a Cromdale resident at 7866 - Jasper Avenue and Edmonton's mayor during the city's Silver Jubilee.

Ken Blatchford was born in Minnedosa, Manitoba, in 1882 and came to Edmonton in the 1890s. He rightly saw Edmonton as a city of opportunity, and his life reflected his sense of the opportunities he saw and captured. A champion athlete in his youth, Ken Blatchford started out in Edmonton by selling newspapers on Jasper Avenue. Later he became an insurance agent, but his greatest accomplishments were in public service. Not only was he a city alderman and mayor in the 1920s, but he was also an elected director of the Exhibition Board and a Member of Parliament for Edmonton East.

During Edmonton's 25th anniversary celebrations, Mayor Blatchford predicted that “If we could all return in thirty years, we should find a scene of progress beyond our most extreme imaginings.” And Ken Blatchford was one of those Edmontonians responsible for the eventual truth of that prediction. Unfortunately, he did not live to see it — apparently he found the pace of keeping up with opportunity too trying. In the spring of 1933, on the riverbank below his home, he took his own life.

Please see number 6 in the map legend.



7913 - 112 Avenue South

This photograph was taken by Ernest Brown. Apparently this was the first house in the Virginia Park subdivision. At the time it was built, it was the home of the William P. Reeves family. The family owned several adjacent lots and had extensive gardens. Also pictured is the house as it is today, with the veranda enclosed.



Please see number 2 in the map legend.

Acknowledgements

The Cromdale Community League would like to acknowledge the work of the following members and other individuals who helped to make this walking tour map a reality:

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If you have information about other Cromdale people or places or about its history in general and would like to help to enrich future publications of the community league, please get in touch with Catherine Corriveau at 477-3287.